



Iowa General Assembly

2017 Committee Briefings

Legislative Services Agency – Legal Services Division
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OPIOID EPIDEMIC EVALUATION STUDY COMMITTEE

Meeting Dates: | [October 16, 2017](#) |

Purpose. This compilation of briefings on legislative interim committee meetings and other meetings and topics of interest to the Iowa General Assembly, written by the Legal Services Division staff of the nonpartisan Legislative Services Agency, describes committee activities or topics. The briefings were originally distributed in the Iowa Legislative Interim Calendar and Briefing. Official minutes, reports, and other detailed information concerning the committee or topic addressed by a briefing can be obtained from the committee's Internet page listed above, from the Iowa General Assembly's Internet page at <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/>, or from the agency connected with the meeting or topic described.

OPIOID EPIDEMIC EVALUATION STUDY COMMITTEE

October 16 and 17, 2017

Co-chairperson: Senator Dan Dawson

Co-chairperson: Representative Dave Heaton

Background: The Opioid Epidemic Evaluation Study Committee was established by the Legislative Council and charged to:

Comprehensively evaluate the state's response to the opioid epidemic in the state, including a review of the protocols and practices relating to the prescribing of opioid medications and the treatment options available including medication-assisted treatment. The committee shall receive input from agencies and entities including but not limited to representatives of the professional licensing boards for professionals authorized to prescribe controlled substances, representatives of public safety and public health, representatives of the medical community and health insurance payers, and consumers and representatives of consumers. The committee shall submit a report, including findings and recommendations, to the Governor and the General Assembly by November 15, 2017.

Procedural business:

Monday, October 16, 2017: The committee was called to order by Temporary Co-chairperson Heaton at 9:03 a.m. and recessed at 4:49 p.m. Temporary Co-chairpersons Dawson and Heaton were approved unanimously as permanent co-chairpersons and the proposed rules were adopted unanimously.

Tuesday, October 17, 2017: The committee was called to order by Co-chairperson Dawson at 9:06 a.m. and adjourned at 3:05 p.m.

Monday, October 16, 2017, presentations:

Ms. Karmen Hanson, Program Director, National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), presented the national perspective relating to addressing the opioid epidemic. She presented information about policies adopted in other states to curtail the supply and demand for opioids, state strategies in prevention, intervention, treatment and recovery, and trends in best practices. Ms. Hanson noted the intersections of the opioid epidemic with multiple disciplines including criminal justice, health, and human services. She offered the ongoing assistance and resources of NCSL as the Iowa General Assembly develops a response to the opioid epidemic in Iowa.

Dr. Carri Casteel, Associate Director, and Ms. Ann Saba, Communications and Research Coordinator, University of Iowa Injury Prevention Research Center (IPRC) provided an Iowa perspective. They noted that the IPRC has been funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Preventions of the United States Department of Health and Human

Services (CDC) since 1991 and is housed in the University of Iowa College of Public Health. The IPRC conducts research to identify solutions, conducts training for practitioners to enable them to take action to prevent violence and injury, and conducts outreach to translate research findings into increased awareness and to influence action. The IPRC has various areas of expertise relating to violence and injury including prescription opioid overdose. The IPRC received funding from the CDC for the period of January through June 2017, with the goal of developing state-specific stakeholder councils to identify policy and program priorities to address prescription opioid concerns; identify next steps in addressing priorities; and identify ways to reach policymakers and other stakeholders with priority recommendations. The IPRC held stakeholder meetings resulting in recommendations for action in the areas of prescriber education, the prescription drug monitoring program, surveillance, addiction treatment, and community-based prevention strategies. One of the recommendations is to improve the accessibility to real-time data for all involved in addressing the opioid epidemic.

Ms. Kathy Weinberg, Executive Director, Iowa Board of Nursing; Mr. Mark Bowden, Executive Director, Iowa Board of Medicine; Mr. Phil McCollum, Associate Director, Iowa Dental Board; and Mr. Andrew Funk, Executive Director, Iowa Board of Pharmacy, presented the perspective and initiatives of each respective board relating to the opioid epidemic.

Ms. Malissa Sprenger, Coordinator, Mercy Turning Point Treatment Center; Mr. Mike Polich, Chief Executive Officer, UCS Healthcare; and Ms. Barb Gay, Executive Director, Area Substance Abuse Council, related their experiences and provided recommendations to reduce the harm of opioids through comprehensive, person-centered opioid use prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery initiatives. The recommendations include the provision of Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) through accredited opioid prevention treatment programs and the establishment of medication units, the adoption of effective strategies for prescribing opioids, and a coordinated response to opioid and heroin use, the adoption of a Good Samaritan law to encourage reporting of overdoses, and increased availability of opioid reversal drugs. Mr. Ron Berg, Prelude Behavioral Services, provided a perspective on treatment in rural areas noting the need for accessibility to MAT and a strong business plan to sustain MAT in rural areas.

Mr. Eric Bailly, Business Solutions Director, Anthem; Dr. KellyAnn Light-McGroary, Chief Medical Officer, United Healthcare; and Dr. Victoria Sharp, Market Chief Medical Officer, AmeriHealth Caritas, Iowa, provided the strategies of each respective Managed Care Organization (MCO) in addressing the opioid epidemic. Anthem's strategy includes prevention, treatment, and recovery and deterrence aspects, including a revised goal of reducing prescribed opioids filled at pharmacies by originally 30 and now 35 percent. United Healthcare's strategy over the next two years includes increasing compliance with CDC opioid prescribing guidelines within its provider network to 75 percent, increasing the number of members receiving MAT to treat addiction by 50 percent, and increasing understanding of the epidemic among staff, customers, providers, and members. The strategy of AmeriHealth Caritas includes requesting that the Medicaid program include Vivitrol as a part of MAT; allowing Medicaid members to access Naloxone; continuing a multifaceted approach to the epidemic involving various stakeholders; and increasing public awareness and education.

Mr. Matt Bravard, Iowa Physical Therapy Association, noted that physical therapy was identified as a recommended safer alternative to opioids for the treatment of chronic pain in the 2016 CDC guidelines urging prescribers to reduce the use of opioids. Physical therapy is a non opioid treatment alternative and is part of the medical model. Unlike opioids, physical therapy has no negative side effects, addresses pain through movement rather than masking pain, and is backed by high-quality evidence as being effective for numerous conditions.

Dr. Wes Nyberg, President, Iowa Chiropractic Society, noted that chiropractic care is a drug-free, noninvasive, and cost-effective alternative to opioids that has documented improved clinical outcomes, reduces costs, and has high levels of patient satisfaction.

Dr. Janie Hendricks, Polk County Medical Society, provided public comment regarding the need for change in and re-evaluation of a one-size-fits-all approach to pain management. Opioids are one option in a physician's arsenal to treat pain.

Ms. Deborah Thompson provided public comment regarding the accidental heroin overdose of her husband, Mr. Joe Thompson, in September 2016.

Tuesday, October 17, 2017, presentations:

Mr. Nathan Blake, Deputy Iowa Attorney General, Iowa Department of Justice, discussed the involvement of the Office of the Attorney General in both state and national activities addressing opioid misuse and enforcement. Mr. Blake highlighted Iowa's current involvement in a multistate opioids investigation and the efforts of other states through state legislation and legal actions to address the opioid epidemic.

Ms. Sarah Ziegenhorn, Executive Director and Co-founder, and Mr. Jonathan Birdsall, Legislative Advocacy Director, Iowa Harm Reduction Coalition; and Mr. Randy Mayer, Bureau Chief, Bureau of HIV, STD, and Hepatitis, Department of Public Health, discussed syringe exchange programs as a means of addressing the human, health care, and monetary harm and costs from the increased use of opioids which involves the use of needles, and the resultant increased prevalence of HIV, Hepatitis C, and other conditions in the state.

Mr. Paul Feddersen, Assistant Director, and Mr. Lee Leichter, Special Agent, Division of Narcotics Enforcement, Iowa Department of Public Safety, provided a law enforcement perspective, including the necessity of law enforcement to have access to real-time prescription information and data through the state's prescription drug monitoring program to aid in the enforcement efforts involving legal and illicit drugs.

Dr. Christopher Buresh, Department of Emergency Medicine, University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine, and Dr. Bret Ripley, Interim Dean, College of Osteopathic Medicine, Des Moines University, discussed the inclusion in their respective medical education curricula and clinical programming of information about the opioid epidemic and strategies physicians should employ in the treatment and management of pain to counter the epidemic.

Officer Al Fear, Cedar Rapids Police Department, provided information regarding the opioid epidemic and the rise of heroin and fentanyl use in the state. The activities of the Eastern Iowa Heroin Initiative include support for increased use of the prescription drug monitoring program by prescribers and passage of a Good Samaritan law to protect persons who report overdoses.

Mr. Matt Hosford, Vice President and Chief Pharmacy Officer, Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield (Wellmark), provided information regarding Wellmark's support of the CDC's guidelines for prescribing opioids for chronic pain, public health efforts to curb the inappropriate use of opioids, and insurance coverage for access to MAT. He noted that there is currently insufficient evidence that newer opioid antagonists provide superior outcomes to existing older treatments.

Dr. Patricia Quinlisk, Medical Director and State Epidemiologist, Mr. Kevin Gabbert, ATR/MAT-PDOA Project Director, and Ms. Deborah Thompson, Policy Advisor and Legislative Liaison, Department of Public Health, reviewed the state of Iowa opioids report card, a checklist of measures that states, including Iowa, are taking in addressing the opioid epidemic; reviewed several opioid-related grant efforts underway to address the opioid epidemic in the state; and suggested steps the state could take in the future.

Ms. Lori Peter, Dubuque, provided public comment regarding the death of her son, Mr. Kelly John Peter, as the result of his heroin addiction, which began with an addiction to prescription opioids.

Tuesday, October 17, 2017, committee discussion:

Committee members provided suggestions for moving forward with legislative action in the 2018 Legislative Session to address the opioid epidemic, based on the presentations and public comment over the course of the two-day meeting.

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